

Ok! So! Here I (Alejandro Valenzuela, from México) go regarding my visa experience.

I basically made a monkey of myself in the process, so try not to make the same mistakes as me.

I am infinitely thankful to the Swedish Embassy people for their outstanding patience, especially to the lady concerning education and the policeman at the reception, as I had a couple of problems.

This information is pertinent to people outside the EU/EEA/Switzerland

IMPORTANT: Make sure you print the latest form from MigrationSverket as I have just found a slight variance over a form I downloaded less than 6 months ago

Things you need

Yesterday I called the **Swedish Embassy in México City**, and I was told the following:

(call to make sure it applies as well to yourself - don't take this for granted)

- You need to present the original passport, and two photocopies of the important pages - in my case, the first two, which show my picture and data. They don't keep the passport, they only want it to make sure the photocopies are O.K.; Another thing: as my passport has the field names in Spanish, **English** and French, no translation was required.
- I had a problem with the bank statement. Earlier in Andrei's blog I whined about the Mexican postal system. Here's the proof: the good-for-nothing f*cking mailman never delivered the bank statement for April (I am seriously considering casually letting my house's door open so my four dogs can get out to have some, er, fun, while he's around.). What to do then? Oh well, just go to the bank and ask for a replacement bank statement. Stamped by the bank, of course.

I got the replacement bank statement allright, but it looked like a photocopy (a good one, though) and it had no stamp. It took three rows, one against the idiotic account executive, one against the even more idiotic guy at the window (can't remember a more appropriate translation right now), and one against the even so more idiotic manager. Finally, we were able to get a bank statement with a most oddly-looking "RECEIVED" stamp. After one more row to make sure we couldn't get a better stamp (hell, why they are not allowed to place a more appropriate stamp is unknown to me, but that's the thing with banks here in México, they are always competing among themselves for the world's worst possible bank award.), we let it go (it DID have the bank's name and date on the stamp. We hoped that would be enough, fortunately it was.)

OK. Yesterday night, I printed the "admissions letter" two times, then headed on to fill in the migrationsverket application form. I think I could suggest to you to print it twice or thrice and fill one (bring the others as backup in case you've made a mistake) of them by hand, unless you have particularly illegible handwriting (I do, but that's not the reason I filled it by computer. I can make my handwriting pretty legible if I'm careful. I simply went on the fancy side.)

Why handwriting instead of fancy computer stuff? The Swedish care more for the information than for the presentation. You'll see why.

1. The typeface can't be changed (at least in my current software configuration), so you're stuck to whatever you can write in the provided space.
2. Corrections can't be done without looking odd.
3. It looks more personal if it's written by you.

The Migrationsverket Form

Ok. So, let's see the **migrationsverket form**:

Page 1

Be very careful of writing the correct duration of studies. Scour your programme's page to be absolutely sure. In the case of my particular programme, I wrote 1 Sept 2008 to 2 June 2010. The last date was guessed using this page: http://www.student.chalmers.se/sp/academic_year_list, since Chalmers finishes courses in the first days of June (I hope they don't mind, on the other hand I'm getting paranoid again - perhaps I should have asked the program coordinator. Oh well, what's done is done.).

I think I wrote I'd enter Sweden in July 2008 and leave on June 2010. If you can't see these fields, you're looking at an OLD application form. Go and download the newest!

Page 2 - "Address in Sweden"

Unless you have arranged accommodation already, or have family living in Sweden, I think you won't have these data. (I don't think it's natural for people to arrange accommodation before getting the visa, and I got the impression the visa stuff must be done ASAP. The lady from the embassy didn't make any comment on those fields being blank, so I don't think there will be any problems at all.)

Page 4

I couldn't think of anything to write in "Further information", so I left it blank. No comment or anything from the lady at the embassy here either, so I guess it's O.K.

I wrote the Swedish Embassy on Mexico City as the place where the decision should be sent. Don't forget your signature!

The Migrationsverket Form - Appendix A

Page 1

I wrote my elementary school's name, then my secondary school's name, then 9 years and the graduation date (2000)

In the following line I wrote my high school's name, then 3 years, then 2003.

Under University/College, I wrote my university's name, then 5 years, then 2008 (I'm doing thesis but I will definitely graduate before I leave for Sweden)

Under "How do you expect to organise your accommodation in Sweden" I wrote "Through adverts on <http://studentlya.nu/> or Chalmers' accommodation offers" (No comment here either from the Embassy lady. I guess it's acceptable. Anyway it's the truth, unless I find some other accommodation website)

Now, IMPORTANT, as I made a huge mistake here: "Do you plan to undertake any other studies in Sweden?"

Because of my particular computer configuration, it got printed in the same page as "Plans for the future". So I thought it was sort of part of "Plans for the future" (You may wonder about my sanity. Don't worry, I don't bite). I wrote "Study a doctorate in the same or similar area". BIG MISTAKE. This field is not for that. The lady at the Embassy told me to correct it manually, consequentially, the total period of studies was wrong as well.

So the answers here were "No", "2 years 0 months", "June 2010".

When I asked her about having trouble over the manual corrections, she said "naah, don't worry". So I guess migrationsverket people are not machines but people :)

Page 2 - "Support during the entire planned study period"

I checked "My own money", mentioned the enclosed bank account photocopies and wrote the balance in MXN and approximate SEK conversion.

Under "Every month I will have..." I divided the balance by 20 months, wrote it in MXN and the approximate SEK conversion. It is a bit over the minimum amount established by migrationsverket. I also wrote that both my parents could deposit more money if I needed it.

At this point, the Embassy lady carefully studied the bank statement photocopies and asked me if the balance total was 146,000 SEK. I told her it was a bit over the minimum, that it was about 170,000 SEK or so. And then she said "ah, yes. That's better".

Under "Plans for the future", I specified I wanted to study doctorate in my area (THIS is the right place to write it) in Sweden, in Chalmers if possible. And I also said I'd like to work, as a teacher/researcher or in one of my program's related areas (I did specify), in México.

I couldn't think of anything to write under "Other information" so I left it blank.

So! that's all with the application form.

Photocopy it when you're done.

The other documents

I also brought 2 passport sized color photographs (I think my hair was not entirely combed, but that's probably the bank's idiotic personnel's fault).

I did not bring any medical insurance-related documents since I was told over the phone it was not necessary because my program lasts more than a year.

I paid the 1000 SEK equivalent and I was given a receipt on behalf of the Swedish Embassy and I was told the Embassy would ring me in 8 to 10 weeks.

“Stan and Laurel / Mr. Bean” (fun) Part

0. I had planned to arrive early. The rows with the stupid bank took much, much more than expected.
1. I arrived at 12:57 believing the Embassy was open until 14:00. It was supposed to close at 13:00.
2. When I was told the closing hour, I panicked, leaving half the documents inside the car. This means later my mom had to come in and out of the embassy many times, even though it was supposed to be closed already.
3. Nevertheless, I was let in.
4. Since I was afraid of screwing everything, I did it regally by forgetting to staple the application form and mixing ALL the pages.
- 4.5 The lady discovers my mistake about the "future studies" part.
5. The lady was infinitely kind, she really tried to help me reorganize the pages from behind the window. Eventually she told me, "well, just go to the table over there, calm down, organize your documents and meanwhile pay the 1000 SEK".
6. I discovered I had completely forgotten to get the money from an ATM. I felt so stupid! There goes mom out again.
7. The lady at the embassy said "Oh. I'll go and eat, and then I'll come back, meanwhile sort out your documents"
8. She came back shortly - I'm sure she didn't eat. Fortunately my mom found an ATM nearby and I had recovered from the panic and had the documents ready and the details corrected.
9. Where are my photos?! I left them in the car. There goes mom again. Can't find them. There I go. Found them (mom was in a state of panic too).
10. Finally, my documents were accepted, everything paid, and I was told I'd be informed in 8 to 10 weeks. It was easily beyond 13:30, I didn't look at the time. When my mom and me exited the Embassy we just started laughing.

Final thoughts

Again, I want to take both the lady - I'll have to find out what her name is - and the policeman for their infinite patience! They never got angry or anything, and they had plenty of reasons.

After being badly treated all these years from all kinds of secretaries and personnel everywhere in my country, I was quite astonished.

Alejandro Valenzuela, Mexico

APPROVED